1/2/69

Oswald Literature Distribution; WDSU, WWL footage, Dirty Work and and by the DA?

By prearrangement, I had an Archives showing of their copies of the WDSU and WWL Oswald- ITM footage at 11 o'clock this morning. At least in the case of WDSU, this is not the footage initially supplied federal agencies. There are indications (but not positive proof) that it is not identical with the footage I obtained from WDSU and that supplied the Garrison office by Johann Rush, who took this footage for WDSU.

The film begins with the standard "academy" leader, the SMPTE timing numbering, beginning with 11. After examining it several time, with the projectionist I made an inspection for mechanical evidence of splicing. There is none. However, between the various segments, there is blank film, perhaps 6-8 frames in length, that is visible in projection. Printed in longhand at the beginning of the WDSU footage is the word "BUTCHER". It also is on my copy.

There are five different scenes in this film. They are the familiar scene. Perhaps because the equipment was of better quality the film seems clearer. The first scene shows a large "Gordon" truck along the Camp St. side of the ITM, near the Common St. Corner. This same truck appears in the WWL footage, leading me to believe that either the truck remained there a long time or both photographers began shooting about the same time, or one did much editing.

This film bears an FBI identification on the reel, in ink, and on the bag, rather sleeve envelope. It has no box of the sort Pan American customarily supplies. In fact, it has no Pan American marking of any kind (the WWL film had a yellow Scotch-tape piece for keeping the film from unwinding on the reel). The identification is New Orleans 89-69. Before the date, which is a surprising date, is the further identification "MOS". There is also the number "116". The WWL film has the same identification except for the number 117. It is labelled "Oswald passing out leaflets."

Now both films are dated 12/3/63. Both agencies were given the film well before this date.

There are seven sequences in the WWL film. They show Oswald wearing dark, possibly black slacks and a tie that seems to be of the same color. The court sequence in the WDSU film shows him wearing light-colored, pleated slacks.

Examination of the FBI and Secret Service reports show that at least stills from the film were in the hands of federal agents not later than 11/23/63. Information from Turner on the Rush film is deficient in this regard, saying nothing about the time the film was given federal agents. However, Hoch overcomes this deficiency in his interview of Rush (of 11/24/68, reportedate 11/25/68). He says "on 11/23 or 11/24 Rush received permission from his boss, John Koperan, to take the original film to Pan American Films to get copies made". He is not certain that the two other sequences, the court scene and the Oswald studio interview, were added at this time. Questioned about the Secret Service use of the words "film clip", Rush says they got all the station had. Rush recalls that "a few days after the assassination, while he was working in the darkroom, he talked to some federal agents who obtained stills and a film from him and took notes." While he seemed to believe they were FBI, Hoch cites the FBI Koperan interview, CD 6:421-2) to indicate the FBI got the film 12/3/63. I suggest it is entirely inconceivable the FBI waited 11 days to get the film, that what they got then was an extra copy, perhaps a version with all sequences combined. The Secret Service descriptions of the film it got make no references to the court and studio sequences (Controls 108,703).

Secret Service Control 703 leaves little doubt that it was in touch with KGBU and Rush not later than 11.24, for by 10 o'clock that night it had a print of Oswald and Steele in San Antonio for Mrs. John Tarsikes to examine. If the exact time the FBI obtained access to the footage is in doubt, there is no doubt at all that they were showing copies of pictures to witnesses before their available reports show they had gotten copies.

It just is not conceivable that with Oswald the accused assassin, there were any pictures of him that all of the federal investigative agencies did not obtain as soon as it was humanly possible.

When I noted the date on this file I asked Marion Johnson for the copies made available to the federal government earlier. He said these were all the Warren Commission files contain. I had asked him to have for me the prints made from the footage. He had three, two post-card size, similar to the Pizzo and Fringuier exhibits, and one great enlargement of Charles Hall Steele, Jr., so large it is quite grainy, about 8x10 in size. These are in File CD 87, which is Secret Service. I asked for the six prints the FBI showed witnesses and the other pictures (the Secret Service reports establishing that Johnny Rush gave a total of 17 copies of an undisclosed number of different frames. I asked for FBI prints, and very certainly the FBI had and used prints, the reports indicating a total of six different scenes. He says they have none. He did show me Garner Exhibit No. 1, which is from the KXL footage, but he refused to make a print for me without their written permission, even though the picture is printed and is commercially available. This is a departure from previous practice, where the picture is made available, as evidence should be, with the restriction stamped on it.

Johnson also told me they had written me about the Tarsikes matter right after Christmas. I have not yet received that letter. I asked him to send me a copy. He says they have found staff documents he thinks may explain the month discrepancy in the Garner picture, it having been shown to Mrs. Garner as Exhibit No. 1 to her husband's affidavit which was not executed until a month after she was deposed.